

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 /070 W  
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R 031700Z AUG 77  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9274  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1176

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, IS, JO  
SUBJECT: MILGOV MOVES TO TRIM INFLUENCE OF WEST  
BANK MAYORS

1. SUMMARY: THE MILGOV HAS INITIATED A POLICY TO REDUCE THE  
ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN LOCAL AFFAIRS, TO STIFLE  
POLITICAL EXPRESSION AND TO ENCOURAGE LINKS WITH JORDAN.  
IN MANY CASES, RELATIONS ARE NOW STRAINED TO THE POINT OF  
RUPTURE. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SIGNS OF SOME EROSION OF POPULAR  
POLITICAL SUPPORT, CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE CURRENT  
ELECTED LEADERSHIP ARE GENERALLY LACKING. END SUMMAR.

2. IN RECENT MONTHS, THE MILGOV HAS SIGNIFICANTLY TOUGHENED ITS  
POLICY TOWARDS THE MUNICIPALITIES OF THE WEST BANK. THE NEW  
POLICY INCLUDES AT LEAST SIX POINTS:

A) MONITORING AND DISCOURAGING POLITICAL STATEMENTS,  
ESPECIALLY TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN (REPORTS FROM BETHLEHEM AND  
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RAMALLAH),  
B) DISTANCING THE MAYORS FROM THE GENERAL MILGOV HQ AT BEIT EL  
AND OBLIGING THEM TO WORK RIGOROUSLY AND LABORIOUSLY THROUGH  
LOCAL MILGOV HQ'S (REPORTS FROM NABLUS AND BETHLEHEM),  
C) IGNORING MUNICIPAL ATTEMPTS TO INTERCEDE IN OBTAINING  
TRAVEL PERMITS, LICENSES ETC. (REPORTS FROM NABLUS, JENIN AND  
RAMALLAH),

D) LIMITING BUDGETARY DISCRETION, E.G. PROHIBITING MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL CHARITABLE SOCIETIES, AND SUPERVISING MORE CLOSELY MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, E.G. CURRENT MILGOV AUDIT OF NABLUS' MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS,  
E) LESS SYMPATHETIC HEARING ON PROPOSED MUNICIPAL PROJECTS, E.G. NABLUS AND HEBRON ELECTRICAL PROJECTS AND BETHLEHEM'S PROPOSED BUS STATION,  
F) REQUIRING CLOSER TIES WITH JORDAN, MOST NOTABLY GOJ APPROVAL TO BRING FUNDS COLLECTED IN ARAB STATES TO WEST BANK. (REPORTS FROM HALHUL AND BETHLEHEM).

3. NEW MILGOV POLICY SEEMS TO BE AIMED AT MUNICIPALITIES AS INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL MAYORS. HENCE, EVEN FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM WHO HAS TRADITIONALLY HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH ISRAELIS IS NO EXCEPTION. HOWEVER, KHALAF OF RAMALLAH AND SHAKA' OF NABLUS--PARE PARTICULAR BETES NOIRES.

4. BOTH FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM AND AL QUDS PUBLISHER ABU ZALAF AGREE THAT CRACK DOWN ACTUALLY PRECEDED TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY TO LIKUD DEFMIN WEIZMAN. THEY BELIEVE IT REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF ARAB AFFAIRS ADVISOR MENAHEM MILSON WHO REPLACED AMNON COHEN LAST YEAR.

5. AMONG THE MAYORS, NEW MILGOV POLICY HAS ACTUALLY CONSOLIDATED RANKS SINCE LOW KEY COOPERATION A LA FREIJ NO LONGER BRINGS  
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SPECIAL TREATMENT. HOWEVER, THE MILGOV HAS APPARENTLY SUCCEEDED SOMEWHAT IN ERODING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR SOME MUNICIPALITIES, ESPECIALLY IN NABLUS WHERE THE ISRAELIS HAVE IN EFFECT ESTABLISHED FORMER MAYOR HAJ MAZUZ AL MASRI AS AN ALTERNATIVE--AND AN EFFECTIVE ONE--TO SHAKA' AT LEAST ON MUNDANE MATTERS. ELSEWHERE, ALTERNATIVES ARE INCAPACITATED, HEBRON'S EX-MAYOR JA'ABARI IS TERMINALLY ILL, OR JUST NOT CREDIBLE.

6. COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT THE MILGOV'S RATHER TRANSPARENT ATTEMPT TO UNDERCUT THE WEST BANK MUNICIPALITIES WILL SUCCEED IN ALIENATING THEIR POPULAR SUPPORT ALTHOUGH NO DOUBT PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS WILL MAKE THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY FOR TRAVEL, BUSINESS, ETC. TO CONTINUE. ANYONE SEEKING TO PROFIT POLITICALLY FROM THE MAYORS' MISERIES WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE OPEN TO ALLEGATIONS OF COLLABORATION.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
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